UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A-80-40
IV-C-94

ASDSF
12.1 V1

SEP 21 1983

Honorable Alan Cranston
United State Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cranston:

This is in response to your letter of August 19, 1983, to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in which you forwarded a letter from (b) (6) and (b) (6) of Dockton, Washington, concerning toxic emissions from the ASARCO, Inc. smelter in Tacoma, Washington. (b) (6) specific concerns about the ASARCO-Tacoma smelter were stated in a letter from (b) (6) to Mr. William Ruckelshaus of the EPA, a copy of which was also enclosed with their letter to you.

(b) (6) letter to Mr. Ruckelshaus was in response to the EPA's request for public comments on national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants (NESHAP) proposed for inorganic arsenic emissions from high-arsenic primary copper smelters (July 20, 1983, 48 FR 33112). (b) (6) urged that the smelter not be exempted from the standards and called for several EPA-funded studies of the negative health and economic impacts of the smelter's air emissions.

The EPA has no plans to exempt the ASARCO-Tacoma smelter from the final NESHAP rules for inorganic arsenic. On the contrary, the proposed NESHAP for high-arsenic primary copper smelters was developed specifically for the ASARCO-Tacoma smelter, since it is the only copper smelter in the United States that uses high-arsenic feed materials.

The proposed standards would require the best available technology (BAT) for arsenic emissions at the smelter. The Agency acknowledges that the estimated health risk, while uncertain, would remain relatively high; but prior to proposal the EPA could not identify additional controls to reduce arsenic emissions short of plant closure. Thus, the decision which the Agency will make when the final standards are issued will involve the question of what level of risks and what level of cost impacts are unreasonable. As stated in the preamble to the proposed standards, the Agency believes that it is necessary to take extraordinary measures to assure that the final determination of the control level that is appropriate for the smelter is based on the most current and accurate information available. To that end, the following steps are being taken:

SYMBOL	PES	SPS					
SURNAME	Fitzmaurice	Grone					
DATE	9-7-83	9-8-83	9/8/83	9-8-83	9/9/83	9/9/83	9/12 9:20

EPA Form 1320-1 (12-70)

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

First, the EPA is currently engaged in refining its estimates of emissions and associated health risks for the smelter. In June 1983, the Agency conducted a comprehensive on-site emission source inventory at the smelter. Later this month, emission testing of two of the principal process emission control devices at the smelter will be performed. Information collected as a result of these activities will be employed to generate more accurate estimates of the smelter's arsenic emissions. Additionally, further evaluation of controls that could potentially be applied to reduce arsenic emissions is being performed. This evaluation is not limited to add-on control equipment, but also covers other measures such as improved operating and housekeeping practices.

Secondly, the EPA Administrator has established a special task force, chaired by a person in EPA's Region X office in Seattle, to participate in the evaluation of emission sources and applicable control technologies. In addition, the task force will consult with experts outside the Agency in the area of innovative control technologies for arsenic.

Additionally, the Agency is making a special effort to involve the residents of Tacoma in the dialogue which has followed the publication of the proposed NESHAP on July 20, 1983. During the past month, the Region X office sponsored a series of public workshops in the communities around the smelter in order to explain the procedures the Agency employed in defining BAT and calculating the risk estimates. The November 2, 1983, public hearing on the proposed standards will be held in Tacoma, in order to ensure that local residents have an opportunity to express their views to the EPA in person.

(b) (6) family lives on Vashon Island, a community which is downwind from the smelter. Past testing has shown that the topsoil of Vashon Island contains arsenic, presumably as a result of the many years of operation of the smelter. A review of all data collected on soils, vegetation, and other environmental media around the smelter, including data from Vashon Island, is being conducted. Following the completion of this review, the EPA will determine what additional studies should be done and what remedial actions may be needed to reduce the arsenic exposure for residents living near the smelter.

In addition, the Region X office is coordinating the efforts of the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency (PSAPCA) in establishing a network of ambient arsenic monitoring stations, one of which is proposed for location on Vashon Island. Funding for the monitoring program and the exposure studies will come from the Superfund Program. The EPA task force is presently engaged in arranging the allocation of resources for these activities.

I appreciate this opportunity to be of service to you and trust that this information will be helpful in corresponding with (b) (6).

Sincerely yours,

151

Joseph A. Cannon
Acting Assistant Administrator
for Air, Noise, and Radiation

bcc: Mr. Ruckelshaus
Office of Public Affairs
Office of Policy and Resource Management
Office of Legal Counsel and Enforcement
Office of Research and Development
Region X
A-103/Ms. Croft

Control Correspondence Number AL08783, Due OANR 9/2/83

PREPARED BY: OAQPS:ESED:SDB:J.A.Cannon:NCM:7th Fl.:(MD-13):541-5601
(PES/G.Fitzsimons/J.Phipps/493-3536/09-08-83)
(ESED Project No. 83/21)